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RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 1036  
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0152  
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SUBJECT: ALLEGATIONS OF "GENOCIDE IDEOLOGY" IN SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS

Classified By: CDA Cheryl Sim, reason 1.4 (B/D)

¶1. (C) Summary. In December allegations of "genocide ideology" surfaced regarding a number of secondary schools around Rwanda. A parliamentary Commission report criticized the Ministry of Education for its alleged lack of concern, and the Education Minister received heavy criticism herself at a special Chamber of Deputies hearing. A new parliamentary commission will revisit the allegations, and frame recommendations for action. Some deputies may have seen these allegations as a convenient means to burnish their genocide survivor credentials at the expense of an apolitical technocrat unused to the hot seat. Nonetheless, the report and the ensuing debate serve to underline that it will take decades to address the root causes of "genocide ideology." End summary.

¶2. (SBU) In Late December Education Minister Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya and her deputy, Minister of State for Primary and Secondary Education Joseph Murekeraho, faced heated criticism in an appearance before the Rwandan Chamber of Deputies, following the release of a report by a parliamentary commission that charged that "genocide ideology" exists in many Rwandan secondary schools. After a two month inquiry, the commission had reported to the full Chamber that in a number of schools evidence of genocide ideology among students had been found, chiefly in the form of anonymous letters and tracts threatening genocide survivors and pledging to finish the 1994 genocide. Several of the parliamentarians suggested Mujawamariya might harbor genocide ideology herself, given what they perceived to be a lack of action by the Ministry and lack of personal commitment by the Minister to eradicating such student behavior.

¶3. (SBU) In her remarks to the parliamentarians, Mujawamariya defended the Ministry and her own actions. Not only had her Ministry taken the allegations seriously and been aware of them previously, she claimed, the parliamentary commission had in fact acted upon the Ministry's own report to it; thus any allegations that her Ministry had been derelict in its response were incorrect. She stressed the Ministry would coordinate its actions with the police, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, and local authorities to both punish transgressors and continue education efforts to prevent such occurrences in the future. At the end of her testimony, parliamentarians announced the creation of a second commission, to further investigate the allegations, seek additional information from Education Ministry officials, and report back to the full Chamber.

14. (C) Contacts at the office of Prime Minister Bernard Makuza (a Hutu) told embassy employee that the Parliament had originally planned to call only the Minister of Education (a Hutu), to castigate her about the commission findings. The Prime Minister's office politely reminded parliamentary officials that the Minister of State for Primary and Secondary Education (a Tutsi), was the executive branch official most directly concerned with the direction of the nation's secondary schools and should be called as well. Both officials were subsequently called to testify.

15. (C) In comments to pol/econ chief on January 2, Chamber of Deputies Vice President Denis Polisi disputed Mujawamariya's account of her Ministry's report to Parliament, saying that the original source of the allegations was a visit by a Deputy to a secondary school in the countryside. The Chamber of Deputies quickly formed a commission to investigate the Deputy's allegations, and "two full volumes" of information had been collected. Polisi said that of the nation's 680 secondary schools, 87 had been investigated, and 32 had been found to contain some measure of "genocide ideology." He agreed that the level of "genocide ideology" varied from school to school, but said that it was more than "simple insults among children" (accounts of the investigation noted that anonymous tracts circulated by Hutu students threatening to kill Tutsi students vied for attention at some schools with anonymous Tutsi tracts offering to "drive our cars through your big Hutu noses").

16. (C) Polisi faulted individual school authorities, saying that schools with "strong leadership" had few problems, while schools with "inattentive" leaders had "many more problems."

After the report of the second Commission, the Chamber of Deputies would recommend courses of actions for the Ministry of Education, he said, and might call for the dismissal of the two Ministers. "We need to act with some caution," he said, as "these are problems that will take decades to solve -- we won't end them with one report." Particularly disturbed at accounts of some secondary school teachers allegedly propagating hatred between Hutus and Tutsis, he commented that "education will not work if the educators are themselves the problem."

17. (C) Comment. Among the assembled legislators criticizing the Ministry of Education for its alleged errors and omissions, several Tutsi survivors heavily criticized the Hutu Minister of Education herself -- for what appear to be the actions of unknown students in far-flung secondary schools. This may have been the case of an easy target too inviting to pass up, particularly heading into an election year. The young and inexperienced Minister of Education belongs to no political party, and could be criticized without offense to any particular political persuasion, including the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front. The new Parliamentary Commission may take a more reasoned approach, and work with the Education Ministry to find acceptable policies to address student offenses, which themselves reflect the challenges of addressing fully the roots of "genocide ideology." End comment.

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